

In The Claims:

1. (currently amended) An isolated polynucleotide ~~as set forth in~~ comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 encoding a γ -butyrobetaine hydroxylase.
2. (currently amended) An isolated recombinant vector comprising the gene polynucleotide of claim 1.
3. (currently amended) ~~The isolated recombinant vector according to claim 2, which has~~ accession number KCCM-10557 An isolated transformant transformed with the recombinant vector of claim 2.
4. (currently amended) ~~An isolated transformant transformed with a recombinant vector comprising the gene of claim 1. The isolated transformant according to claim 3, wherein said transformant is *Escherichia coli*.~~
5. (currently amended) The isolated transformant according to claim 4, ~~which~~ wherein said transformant is *Escherichia coli* DH5 α CJ2004 having accession number KCCM-10557.
6. (canceled)
7. (currently amended) ~~A method of preparing L-carnitine, which comprises hydroxylating γ -butyrobetaine using the γ -butyrobetaine hydroxylase from a transformant transformed with a recombinant vector comprising a gene is selected from the group consisting of a polynucleotide as set forth in SEQ ID NO. 1 or a polynucleotide encoding a γ -butyrobetaine hydroxylase as set forth in SEQ ID NO.2~~
A method of preparing L-carnitine, comprising:
 - a) cultivating the transformant of claim 3 in a culture medium;
 - b) obtaining a protein crude extract comprising γ -butyrobetaine hydroxylase from the culture medium;
 - c) incubating said protein crude extract and γ -butyrobetaine in a reaction buffer;

and

d) collecting L-carnitine from the reaction buffer.

8. (previously presented) The method of preparing L-carnitine according to claim 6, wherein the transformant is *Escherichia coli*.

9. (currently amended) The method of preparing L-carnitine according to claim 6, wherein the ~~recombinant vector has~~ transformant is *Escherichia coli* DH5 α CJ2004 having accession number KCCM-10557.